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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002357

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, NEA/PPD, NEA/PPA, NEA/AGS, INR/IZ,  
INR/P  
E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ SECURITY ELECTIONS; BAGHDAD

1. SUMMARY: The major themes in the daily newspapers on June 1 were the developments of the security and political situations. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES  
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- 1A. "Accidental mistake" (6/1)

Ad-Dustoor (independent) published a front-page editorial by Bassem Al-Sheikh about the arrest of the Iraqi Islamic Party leader:

"The improper arrest of Dr. Muhsin Abdul Hamid has proven to be a mistake and the occupation forces were forced to respond to the arrest by saying it was unintentional. However, this arrest is a serious violation against Iraqi political figures and groups. This is not the first incident because many Iraqi politicians have been arrested under weak pretexts. We noticed that the arrest came after the Iraqi government announced its thanks to Dr. Hamid for condemning the terrorist operations that target innocent Iraqis. Dr. Hamid was arrested without reference to his scientific, patriotic and political position. This represents a direct disregard for human rights. Dr. Hamid was insulted, arrested by mistake, but in the end, they apologized to him. This story reminds me of the deposed dictator who used to execute innocent Iraqis and later realized that they were innocent. After he killed them, he sent a handwritten apology to the victim's family as if nothing unusual had happened. It seems that history has started to repeat itself. We cannot believe that an American force could conduct an early morning raid on a house of a prominent figure like Dr. Hamid and then consider the action as an unintentional mistake. It seems that this arrest was an operational mistake based on incorrect information. Indeed, if this is what really happened this means that perhaps hundreds of detainees were arrested according to wrong information and they are still kept in custody. The Iraqi situation can not bear anymore mistakes either intentional or unintentional."

- 1B. "In preparation for the upcoming elections" (6/1)

Al-Mada (independent) published a last-page editorial by Muhammad Sa'eed Al-Saghar about the upcoming Iraqi elections:

"We have successfully held elections, formed a national assembly and a new government. However, this accomplishment was our dream and we did not want to make this dream come true through a cesarean section. It is not our choice to make Iraq suffer from the current ethnic and sectarian crisis because this crisis is a result of the occupation. Meanwhile, we have to call for national unity and we must preserve social and national tolerance. Iraq has different ethnicities and sects. No one group has the right to control it by itself because Iraq is for all Iraqis. And all Iraqis must have equal rights.

Before holding the upcoming elections the Iraqi people must weigh in on the ethnic power-sharing experiment. This experiment was the basis for establishing the new government. We want the next elections to be based on direct voting for the candidates. We do not want these elections to be based on the electoral lists. These lists may contain candidates we do not know about.

We want efficient and loyal candidates who protect the interests of the people and the country. We want candidates who will move Iraq away from sectarianism, racism, and tyranny. We are all citizens of the new Iraq. The government must guarantee the rights of all people.

This must be done by the law and not by people who have a monopoly on information."

JEFFREY